[Mr. James Fletcher]

of relieving large numbers of weavers from poverty and ruin. That is how these poor weavers have been able to carry on their work and earn their living.

Another fortunate windfall on account of the war is the manufacture of tapioca flour in Travancore. That is an industry which is now going on in the southern parts of Travancore on a large scale. It has even come to a state when tapioca is not available for food; it has risen to such high prices that people even begin to desire that manufacture of flour may be restricted. But it brings very good income not only to the tapioca grower but also to the workers as well as to the middlemen who purchase the flour and send it outside Travancore.

Mr. T. Krishna Pillai: May I know whether the honourable member is aware that most of these middle men are not men of this country but come from Bombay and other places?

Mr. James Fletcher: The middle men are not men from foreign provinces, but the agents who are taking the flour from Travancore to the factories concerned, belong mostly to Bombay and Ahmedabad because they are employed by the big firms there.

Mr. T. Krishna Pillai: Does not the honourable member think that it will be better that the Industries Department or some other Department of Government deal directly with these firms so that the profit that goes to the middlemen may go to the poor agriculturists themselves?

Mr. James Fletcher: It is a commercial business. I would not suggest that the Government should interfere in commercial workings. If possible, they should try to restraint large profiteering and any other mischief done by the middlemen.

President: It is perfectly legal for anybody to get into touch with foreign markets and carry on the business. But so far as I am concerned I may tell the House because I have been connected with the question of war supplies for sometime that it was a desperate state of affairs. I could not make any progress. The great difficulty for men engaged in the task was to find local men who were prepared to come forward in adequate numbers or in an organised manner to take up contracts. It was at last with very great difficulty that we were able to organise the War Supplies Syndicate. I can personally testify to that. I was in search of local men to take up the work. It was with the joint effort of Mr. Chacko and with great difficulty that we were able to send even a single item to the Kasauli Institute for the purpose of testing. I am bitterly complaining about the want of local effort. So far as it is available it will have the greatest possibilities of development. I beseech honourable members of the House to do propaganda work to see that local men do engage themselves more and more in this task.

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Mr. T. Krishna Pillai: May I know whether they will not have to compete with big capitalists?

President: That again is a mistaken impression. There is no capitalist to compete against. In fact there was not one capitalist available who had engaged himself in this matter. It was only the small cottage industry man who was available to us at the time. I was able to get, through Mr. E. I. Chacko, people to contract for not more than 50 or at the most 100 lbs. of tapioca flakes. That was all that we were able to bargain for. Capitalists turn out only at the last moment. Government will certainly put all their strength on the side of the local concerns and not on the side of the capitalists.

Mr. James Fletcher: Further the war conditions have given Travancore many chances for increasing the various small cottage industries in this country. Buttons, cups and saucers and other goods could be easily manufactured and, to a great extent, the Director of Industries, I am sure, will be of immense help to the people of Travancore in this matter. The Department should have more funds to be lent to the people who are carrying on the cottage industries. That is why I submit that about Rs. 10,000 more is required which could be lent on property security to the people who are prepared to take up such industries and war contracts.

Mr. T. Krishna Pillai: I wish to offer a suggestion. Since the time for the demand is almost over and as we are anxious to hear the Director of Industries he may be asked to speak. If there is time after that we can speak.

Mr. E. I. Chacko: Sir, I am very greatful to the honourable members of the House for evincing keen and deep interest in the matter of industries and particularly cottage industries. Industries in this State and in other places too may be classed under two heads—large scale industries and small scale industries. Among the large scale industries here, may be classed the Rubber Factory, the Ceramic Factory, the Sugar Factory, the Paper Mills and the Cement Factory we are contemplating to start shortly. We can have various other large scale industries also in view of their possibilities and also in view of the abundant raw materials and the resources at our command. One is a spinning mill somewhere in Travancore preferably in South Travancore where cotton also can grow. We require for the consumption of the handloom weavers of this country which number about 30 to 50 thousand anything like 2000 bales of yarn per month. That means that we require about 3 or 4 mills to produce the necessary yarn for the use of our handloom weavers. There is plenty of profit in this business so much so that the spinning mills in Coimbatore, Ahamedabad and other places have been declaring dividends to the extent of 40 to 60 per cent during the last year. It is a regrettable fact, Sir, that

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